



INTERNATIONAL
WAQF FUND

International Waqf Fund
Annual Report 2023

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Rightsholders receiving Ramadan food packs in Mali

Assalamu alaykum Peace be with you

2023 was a year of great challenge around the world as global hunger rose, conflict flared, and disasters shattered lives and communities – and as always, the world's poorest people bore the brunt of the suffering. International Waqf Fund was determined to assist. The annual revenue earned from investing donations in the United Kingdom funded **£407,631** worth of life-saving and life-changing interventions by Islamic Relief, a leading global relief and development charity.

When powerful earthquakes flattened communities in Morocco, Syria, and Türkiye, we ensured survivors received food, water, and warm clothes; gave medicines to hospitals; and cash so families could meet their most urgent needs. When ordinary Palestinians in Gaza were besieged and bombarded, we stood in solidarity: our funding ensured survival items including hot meals, medical supplies, and blankets reached thousands of people. Whilst the crisis forced the suspension of the healthcare project we began in May 2023, thankfully our sponsorship of orphaned children in Gaza continued without interruption. In addition, orphan families in Niger, where millions of people lived in extreme poverty, relied on our sponsorship to make ends meet.

Meanwhile in Afghanistan, we supported an innovative programme through which 120 guardians of orphaned children began earning a reliable living, kick-starting their journey toward self-sufficiency. In Lebanon, 80 young Lebanese people and Palestinian refugees benefited from training and other support to set up new enterprises. A project we funded in South Sudan repaired and constructed water facilities, built a school, and installed latrines; while wells and water purification plants were constructed Sri Lanka with our backing. We also funded an intervention to boost access to quality education in the Kurdistan region of Iraq: in two schools, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities were installed and buildings renovated and refurbished.

International Waqf Fund continued investing in seasonal programming that eased the hunger of thousands of poor families in 2023. Qurbani meat was distributed in two countries, while Ramadan food parcels reached households in four countries.

Alhamdulillah, **this year we funded 12 projects in 14 countries** and sponsored orphans in Gaza and Niger. None of this would be possible without the generous support of our amazing donors and partners, thanks to whom **we touched an incredible 24,700 lives this year**. With your continued support, will continue to stand by the sides of the world's most vulnerable people.

Dr Mohammad Al-Saghir
Director
International Waqf Fund

International Waqf Fund Annual Report 2023 Foreword

? What is Waqf?

Blessings and benefits that last. A centuries-old Islamic tradition established by the Prophet Muhammad (**peace be upon him**), Waqf is a form of charitable giving that has provided sustainable support to charitable, educational, and religious causes throughout the Muslim world.

It is a donation of money, property or other assets, the profit from which is given away as charity. Giving Waqf means never-ending blessings for the donor, as their gift keeps on giving – **the original gift is preserved intact so it can continue to help vulnerable people year after year (Sadaqa Jariyah).**



WASH facilities in South Sudan funded by International Waqf Fund



WASH facilities in South Sudan funded by International Waqf Fund

i About Us

Recognising the need for sustainable charity, **in the year 2000**, Islamic Relief the parent company of International Waqf Fund began offering Shariah-compliant Waqf shares as a means of donation. Since then, the generosity of Waqf donors has powered lifesaving and life-changing humanitarian interventions in over 25 countries worldwide.

The concept of Waqf preserves intact the original donation or 'investment', which can be in the form of money, property, or other assets – **whilst using the profit to help vulnerable people**. As a result, the original donation produces a charitable income year after year.

Waqf aims to achieve ongoing benefits. Those who make Waqf donations gain never-ending blessings, whilst others receive the lifesaving and life-changing assistance they need. The funds we raise from our generous donors are currently being invested into Sharia-compliant investments. We utilise the returns of these investments to implement charity projects across the globe. **In addition to having raised more than £8 million. We receive an annual average return of 7-5%.**



VALUES

We remain guided by the timeless values and teachings of the Qur'an and the prophetic example (Sunnah), most specifically: Sincerity (Ikhlās), Compassion (Raḥma) and Custodianship (Amana).



MISSION

To help communities lift themselves out of poverty through long-term sustainable solutions that lead to positive and lasting change



VISION

Inspired by our Islamic values, we envisage a world in which thriving communities help everyone achieve their God-given potential

Where we worked in 2023



The Donation Cycle

Waqf is a donation of money, property or other assets, the profit from which is donated as charity. Thus, **it is the gift that keeps on giving!**

We preserve the original gift intact, so that it can continue to help vulnerable people year after year (**Sadaqah Jariyah**). We only invest in shariah-compliant and low-risk investments.



Waqf in 2023

<p>Gaza</p> <p>£50,000 Health and Nutrition</p>	<p>Gaza Niger Afghanistan</p> <p>£41,610 Orphan and Child welfare</p>	<p>Sri Lanka South Sudan</p> <p>£98,000 Water and Sanitation</p>	<p>Bosnia Lebanon</p> <p>£42,232 Sustainable Livelihood</p>
<p>Türkiye Syria Morocco Gaza</p> <p>£85,775 Emergency and Disaster Preparedness</p>	<p>India Mali Palestine Syria</p> <p>£29,999 Ramadan</p>	<p>Iraq</p> <p>£50,000 Education</p>	<p>Mali Niger</p> <p>£10,015 Qurbani</p>

Displaced Palestinian children taking shelter in a school

A lifeline for besieged and bombarded Palestinian families
Emergency and Disaster Preparedness



Children in Gaza receiving hot meal provided by International Waqf Fund

location: **Gaza** People helped: **9,456 people** Cost: **£35,000**

Gaza has been subject to decades of occupation and recurring conflict, and this year an unprecedented escalation inflicted further suffering upon the Palestinian people. **Israel's bombardment of Gaza killed tens of thousands of people and injured many more. Overwhelmed hospitals struggled to treat casualties as supplies of medicines, equipment and even electricity dwindled.** There were reports of doctors forced to operate using only the light of mobile phones, and hospitals being bombed and besieged.

Israel tightened its **16-year-long blockade**, for weeks cutting Palestinian families off from vital food, water, fuel, medicine and other supplies. Some humanitarian aid was eventually permitted to enter Gaza, but the few aid trucks were just a drop in a rising ocean of need. Around **1 million people** were displaced in Gaza, and schools sheltering families were reportedly attacked. Everywhere, people struggled to find food and clean water. Among them were Islamic Relief aid workers, who suffered alongside the communities they worked tirelessly to assist.

"It is shocking to me that today, in the 21st century, the people of Gaza are living – not living, just trying to survive, really – like this," said an Islamic Relief aid worker whose name we have concealed for their safety. "People are being killed for just being here, trapped, with no way to escape, no way to get our children to safety. Families are torn apart."

Islamic Relief was on the ground in Gaza, working with local partners to provide life-saving aid. Funding from International Waqf Fund enabled the charity to help over **9,400 people**. Thousands of hot meals were provided to vulnerable families, alongside food parcels, vegetables and food vouchers. Water was also distributed, as were hygiene kits, blankets, and mattresses. Hospitals received medical supplies, two orphaned children were sponsored, and fun activities gave respite to **171 traumatised children**.



Our funding helped support Islamic Relief's humanitarian aid efforts in Gaza, including distributing food parcels to families forced to evacuate their homes



A displaced Palestinian family currently sheltering in a school, talk to Islamic Relief about their dire situation. They received food and a blanket through International Waqf Fund

Saving lives with swift disaster response in Türkiye and Syria Emergency and Disaster Preparedness

In the early hours of 6 February, a powerful earthquake struck southern Türkiye. Homes collapsed on top of sleeping families in Türkiye and in neighbouring Syria. Terrified survivors faced a series of aftershocks, including a second quake nearly as powerful as the first, with makeshift shelters offering little protection from the harsh winter weather.



Diba and her three grandchildren have returned to their home at the orphanage and continue to be supported by Islamic Relief's orphan sponsorship programme.

Location: **Türkiye and Syria** People helped: **1573 people** Cost: **£30,775**

"We were at home and the children woke up, terrified by the tremor," said Diba, a Syrian refugee living with her grandchildren in a Turkish orphanage supported by Islamic Relief.

"I tried to put on my hijab and run downstairs with the children and everyone else. We went out into the snow, without a coat to protect us from the cold. My eyes were on the children, I couldn't protect them from the cold or contain their terror, but thank God we survived.>>

The orphanage closed its doors, until the municipality could ensure it was safe for habitation. Without family to take them in, Diba and the children spent months sleeping rough in mosques, shops, and public buildings – **even sometimes out in the open, when fear of being inside a falling building overcame them.**

The disaster affected **11 Turkish provinces** – including some of the poorest parts of the country – in which around **518,000 buildings** were damaged or destroyed. Some **2.7 million people** were estimated to have been displaced by the disaster. In northwest Syria, the quakes devastated communities in which most people already relied on humanitarian aid. More than **93,000 individuals** were thought to have fled their homes. Across both countries, **57,000 people** were killed, and many more injured.

Islamic Relief was among the first charities to respond. It ploughed **1.49 million Euros** into the humanitarian effort, with International Waqf Fund contributing to the cost. The emergency programme was a lifeline from the first day of the disaster. Over **4,200 families** in four Turkish cities received cash so they could buy desperately needed items such as food, water, and blankets. Orphan families sponsored by Islamic Relief living in the affected area also received cash and support – **Diba and her grandchildren were among them.**

"The aid we received from Islamic Relief, wherever we were... they kept in contact with us, sending everything we needed such as food baskets, cooked food, hygiene items. Islamic Relief also sent money for our urgent needs, helped me overcome many of the difficulties that surrounded us from fear and hunger."

The emergency response stretched across the border into northwest Syria, where Islamic Relief was a lifeline in Idlib and Aleppo. Thousands of families received food, firewood, heaters, cooking stoves, hygiene kits, blankets and mattresses. Islamic Relief helped remove rubble from roads and provided 20 health facilities with medical items and medicine. In the three weeks after the disaster, over 141,800 packs of bread were distributed to survivors.

Reaching earthquake survivors with essential aid Emergency and Disaster Preparedness



Hamid outside his makeshift shelter in Douar As-Salam village, Morocco

 location: **Morocco**
 People helped: **888 people**
 Cost: **£20,000**

Morocco was also struck by a devastating **earthquake in 2023**. With its epicentre in the High Atlas region, **the 6.8 magnitude quake hit at night on 8 September. It flattened villages and killed entire families.** Survivors scrambled to reach loved ones buried under the rubble, while rescue and relief efforts were hampered by the mountainous terrain, debris and risk of landslides. Within days, a strong aftershock toppled more homes.

Over **3,000 people** lost their lives, with thousands more injured. Hospitals, schools and homes lay in ruins, leaving many traumatised survivors sleeping outside as winter closed in. Among them was Hamid, who lived in Douar As-Salam village.

“The aftermath has been nothing short of devastating, with all our possessions rendered irreparably damaged,” said Hamid. “The houses that now lay in ruins were a product of our relentless efforts. We built them with our own hands. The unforgiving cold now chills our makeshift tents, adding another layer of hardship.”

International Waqf Fund was a lifeline for Hamid and hundreds of others. Spending **£20,000**, we made sure survivors received much-needed warm clothing, mattresses, blankets, and hygiene kits.

“We extend our heartfelt gratitude to those who have come forward to lend a helping hand in our time of need. We sincerely pray that Allah rewards your kindness with abundant goodness.”



Children in Morocco's High Atlas region outside tents set up by families that lost their homes to the earthquake.



Islamic Relief and local partners distribute winter survival items funded by International Waqf Fund

location: **Niger and Gaza** People helped: **5 people** Cost: **£1,610**

In many places around the world, orphaned children are among the most marginalised. Having lost their father, and sometimes their mother too, they often face a life of poverty in which the struggle for survival crowds out opportunities to build brighter futures.

In 2023, International Waqf Fund provided a safety net for **5 orphaned children, through Islamic Relief's orphan sponsorship programme.** The intervention gave the guardians of the sponsored child a regular financial stipend to help meet the child's basic needs and enable them to go to school. Many of the families involved with the sponsorship programme also benefited from other Islamic Relief projects, such as support with healthcare, and food distributions.

This year, **we sponsored children in Gaza,** where the Israeli siege and bombardment saw children facing nightmare conditions. Frequent and prolonged telecommunications outages made communications extremely difficult, but Islamic Relief staff in Gaza worked tirelessly to ensure families continued to receive financial assistance.

We also sponsored children in Niger, a west African country in which a staggering 12 million people are thought to be living in extreme poverty.

Standing by the side of families in need Orphans and Sustainable Livelihoods



Fourteen-year-old Mariama with her mother, Maimouna, at their home in Niger. Maimouna, 44, has been the sole breadwinner for their household since her husband died. It has been a constant struggle to provide for her two daughters and two sons with the little she earns selling vegetables. When her youngest daughter, Mariama, was enrolled in the orphan sponsorship programme, this eased the hardship the family faced. She was able to buy school stationery for Mariama, who is now thriving at school and also enjoying Qur'anic school.



Kadidjatou (middle), with her sister, Aichatou, and mother, Fati. The schoolgirl lives with her mother and two siblings in Niger, where they have lived in a flat made from cement and mud ever since her father died. Fati earns little from selling porridge, and so to make ends meet she relies on the sponsorship stipend they receive for Kadidjatou. With the money, she has been able to buy clothes for her children and pay for the items Kadidjatou needs for school.

"Thank you so much for supporting my education," says Kadidjatou, who has just turned 18 and is a bright student with plans to become a doctor. "My wish is to have the best job after my studies, and support other vulnerable people."

Fadimata, 14, with her schoolbag. She lives with her mother and two siblings in a small flat in Niger. Her mother, Zeinabou, is a widow struggling to provide for her family by selling firewood and cornflour - so the regular stipend she receives from the sponsorship scheme makes a big difference. Not only does the money help feed her children, it also enables her to buy items that are important for school; which Fadimata is determined to make the most of.



"After my studies, I wish to become a doctor to provide medical treatment to sick persons, says Fadimata, describing her dreams for the future."

 Location: **Afghanistan**
 People helped: **600 people**
 Cost: **£40,000**

After decades of conflict and instability paired with repeated natural disasters, **in 2023 Afghanistan teetered on the brink of economic collapse**, with grave humanitarian consequences. Soaring unemployment, poverty, and food prices left one in three Afghans uncertain where their next meal will come from. Six million people were just one step away from famine, and a staggering two thirds of the population desperately needed humanitarian aid.

Women and children bore the brunt of the suffering, with sanctions against females participating in work and education. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), a staggering **100 per cent of households headed by women needed humanitarian aid to survive**. Meanwhile, children in dire need were turned away from orphanages, as scores of institutions have closed their doors, having run out of money. Malnutrition among women and children was on the rise.

Islamic Relief's orphan sponsorship programme was a safety net for thousands of the most vulnerable families, providing a regular stipend to help provide for the child. This year, **the programme received a much-needed boost from an International Waqf Fund project**. The project focused on some of the most vulnerable families in receipt of sponsorship, aiming to help them generate an income and improve their living conditions.

Through the initiative, entrepreneurial parents and guardians living in Kabul province received support to create their own business plan. Islamic Relief gave them business and skills training, as well as cash grants of around **\$500-\$600 USD** so they could start small enterprises such as a shop, carpet weaving, poultry-farming, and tailoring. The project introduced participants to others, so they could share inspiration and ideas, and work together to forge links with local markets. Families lacking access to adequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities received a cash grant so they could make improvements such as repairing kitchens and washrooms, and installing water pumps.

Mother-of-12 Zia was among the enterprising participants. Since her husband died three years ago, Zia has been singlehandedly providing for her children by baking and selling bread in her Kabul neighbourhood. Still, making ends meet was a constant challenge.

A woman in Afghanistan's Kabul province uses the sewing machine she bought with support from the International Waqf Fund

Supporting vulnerable families to earn a reliable living in Afghanistan

Orphans and Sustainable Livelihoods

International Waqf Fund



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"This situation has led to financial hardships, making it challenging for me to meet my basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, and education expenses," said Zia, 45. "These difficulties often weigh heavily on my mind, causing me to feel depressed. Moreover, the responsibility of caring for 12 children, most of whom are under 18, adds to the challenges I face daily."

Islamic Relief's sponsorship programme eased the hardships Zia and her children face, but the enterprising mother wanted to escape the poverty trap forever. Joining the International Waqf Fund's project, within just two months, **she felt hopeful for the future.**

"I hope to purchase a cow to provide my children with dairy products and also generate income by selling these products. Additionally, I plan to sell the calf in the future to improve my quality of life. **By keeping a dairy cow, I will be able to increase my monthly earnings, meet the needs of my family, and overcome my financial difficulties.** This business venture will provide me with stability and access to essential resources."

In total, the project enabled **120 guardians** to earn a reliable living, so they could better provide for themselves and their children, and move toward financial independence. It also helped improve health outcomes for whole families, **thanks to better living conditions and access to food.**

Islamic Relief registers a widowed woman eager to participate in the International Waqf Fund's project



Rightsholders working at the carpet weaving and tailoring enterprises funded by International Waqf Fund.



 location: **Lebanon**
 People helped: **80 young people**
 Cost: **£40,000**

For years, Lebanon has been gripped by the most devastating and complex crisis in its modern history, **as the Covid19-** pandemic and the Beirut Blast – a huge explosion **in 2020** – worsened the economic and financial crisis. **By 2023**, the country's freefalling economy had fuelled widespread poverty and unemployment, particularly among young people.

Unable to find work, many educated and skilled young people left the country in search of prospects elsewhere, causing a brain drain that depleted Lebanon's ability to emerge from the crisis. **Those that remained in the country faced dwindling employment opportunities and growing inequality, as the gap between the richest and poorest people continued to expand.**

This year, we funded a special Islamic Relief project to help enterprising young people from poor Lebanese and Palestinian refugee families to build brighter futures. Running for nine months, the countrywide scheme invited young people to apply for a place, and referrals by partner organisations. In total, **40 young men and 40 young women**, all of whom were orphans, received skill-building vocational training.

Recognising that many of the poorest people are unable to access conventional finance to set up an enterprise, Islamic Relief made sure to remove this barrier. Participants eager to set up a business were encouraged to create business plans, which were carefully assessed, with **20 of the young people receiving support with start-up equipment and materials.**

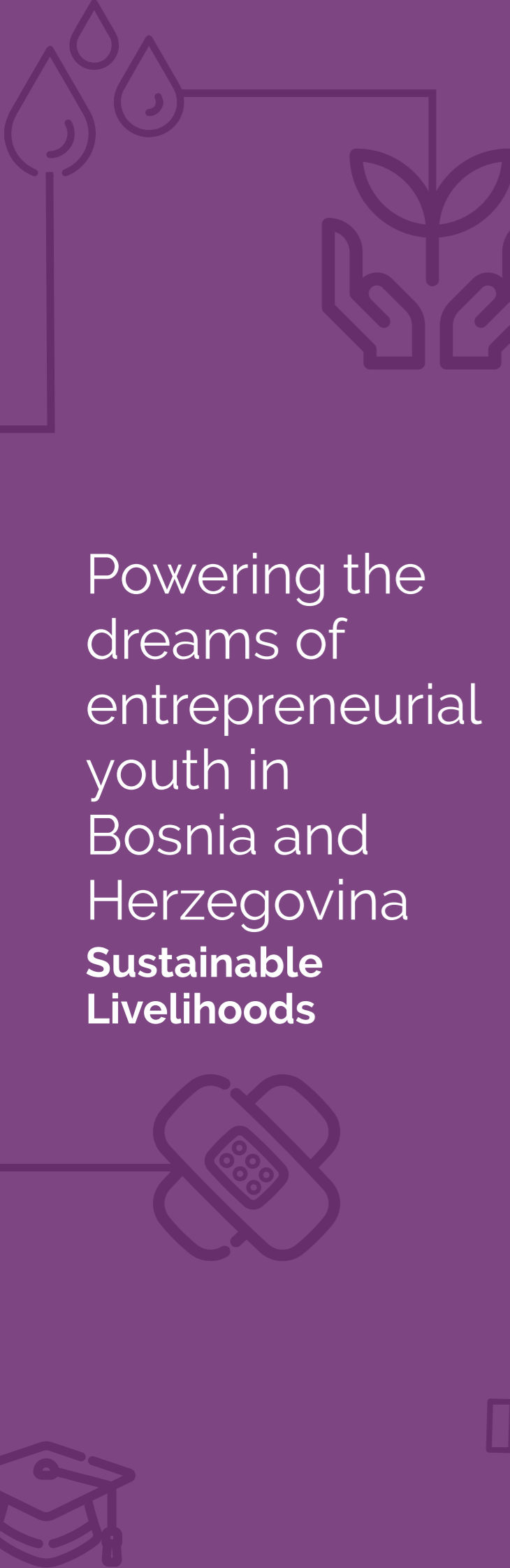


A skill-building vocational training session funded by International Waqf Fund

Improving prospects for enterprising young people in Lebanon

Orphans and Sustainable Livelihoods





Powering the dreams of entrepreneurial youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Sustainable Livelihoods



Entrepreneurship training session in Bosnia and Herzegovina

 Location: **Bosnia**
 People helped: **25 young people**
 Cost: **£2,232**

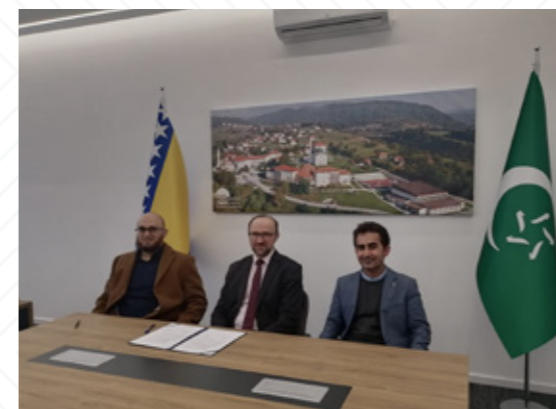
Despite improvements in recent decades, poverty and inequalities remain relatively high in Bosnia, where International Waqf Fund sought to boost outcomes **for enterprising young people in 2023.**

Teaming up with a madrasah, school, we delivered an intensive two-day training event to equip **25 final year** students with the skills and support needed to launch successful business ventures. The first Visoko Entrepreneurship Bootcamp programme guided students from initial idea right through to modelling their business and managing the financing side. **It also connected participants to a global network of entrepreneurs and sources of ongoing guidance needed to take their business ideas to the next level.**

“The bootcamp provided invaluable insights into various aspects of entrepreneurship, including business planning, marketing strategies, and financial management,” said Mustafa, who participated in the training. “I was particularly impressed by the calibre of speakers and mentors involved in the programme, as well as the hands-on approach to learning through interactive workshops and case studies. **I am sure the knowledge and skills gained during the bootcamp will be instrumental in shaping my entrepreneurial journey and refining my business ideas.**

“I am eager to further more expand my knowledge in entrepreneurship and business studies considering the world we live in today. It is essential for us, younger generations, to expand our views and improve creativity as well as critical thinking which all can lead to new ideas and projects.”

A collaboration with Osman-ef. Redžović madrasah, the initiative was designed to enhance business horizons in the Balkan region.



Directors of IWF and Madrasah signing partnership and service agreements.



IWF Director awarding certificates to participants

Worldwide, poor people struggle to take out loans with conventional banks, which require sufficient collateral and payment of interest. As a result, many cannot borrow funds needed to set up small, income-boosting enterprises; carry out essential repairs to their home; or even get through an unexpected crisis.

Location: **Bosnia** People helped: **100 people** Cost: **£50,000 Microfinance Fund**

In 2019, drawing on donations from two years prior, we began funding a microfinance project helping widowed women, orphaned children, and survivors of conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2022 and 2023, the initiative provided 100 vulnerable people with small, interest free loans.

Some 31 people took out a loan to improve their living conditions, such as by funding home repairs, or installing important facilities such as bathrooms.

A loan covered the cost of school fees and equipment for 15 people, while over 30 people used the money to pay for unexpected expenses. Building a reliable livelihood was top of the priority list for 23 people, including Faketa, who moved close to Sarajevo after her husband was murdered in the Srebrenica genocide of 1995. Starting out again with nothing, the remarkable woman made sure her two children pursued an education; and bought land and built a family home. She also began growing fruit and vegetables, which in time became a livelihood for her and her son. Faketa used her microfinance loan to invest in agriculture, increasing their yields and increasing their income.

Mother-of-four Alma also accessed an International Waqf Fund loan to expand a small agriculture enterprise. When her husband died, Alma became the sole breadwinner for her family. With one child enrolled on Islamic Relief's orphan sponsorship programme, she received a regular stipend to help meet the household's basic needs. Determined to lift her family out of poverty, she turned her kitchen garden into a source of income, using the space to cultivate vegetables for sale to local restaurants. Enterprising Alma used her loan to buy onion and potato seeds to significantly increase her crop and earning potential.

Financing brighter futures Sustainable Livelihoods



Faketa in her Greenhouse growing fruit and vegetables.



Alma's Potato and Onion crop



Alma on her farmland



 Location: **Mali and Niger**
 People helped: **3,211 individuals**
 Cost: **£10,015**

Uncertain of where their next meal would come from, many of the world's poorest families faced hunger this Eid-ul-Adha. Determined to ease hunger and share the joy of the festival, **we performed 209 Qurbanis on behalf of our donors.** Meat from the sacrificial animals was distributed to poor families in two west African countries, **where spiralling food prices and faltering economic growth pushed even more people into extreme poverty in 2023.**

In Mali, **210 families received a Qurbani meat package.** Among them were Aichata and her four children. The family live in the capital city, Bamako, in a small and dilapidated house which leaks during the rainy season.

"My life changed after the death of my husband," said the 32-year-old, explaining her struggle to provide for her children. **"I am the sole breadwinner for the family now. I started trading cola nuts to support my children. When customers buy from me, I earn something, but I often return home having only earned a little, so we rely on Allah and manage with what we have. It is very difficult to cover all expenses in terms of schooling and caring, and feeding my children."**

Aichata rarely earns enough to buy meat, so receiving a Qurbani package was cause for great excitement in the household.

"I cannot tell you how much this Qurbani meat pack helps my children and I. Thanks to this Qurbani meat we enjoyed Eid al-Adha to the fullest, like everybody else. The children were so happy. On behalf of the whole family, I thank the generous donors so much. May Allah grant them the best in Jannah."

Mother-of-three Balkissa also received a Qurbani meat pack. She and her family live in Niamey, capital of Niger, where **284 families benefited from Qurbanis paid for by International Waqf Fund.**



Qurbani animals being checked and approved by vet in Niger



Balkissa cooks the Qurbani meat she received thanks to International Waqf Fund

Sharing joy at Eid-ul-Adha Qurbani



Qurbani meat distribution in Mali



"I run a small business selling condiments in our neighbourhood, while at the same time sewing," said Balkissa, 37. The sole breadwinner, she struggles to provide for her children with her meagre earnings, and relies on the support of the Islamic Relief orphan sponsorship programme.

"It is a very difficult situation but thanks to God we manage to survive," she adds, explaining that she can rarely afford to buy meat. "We eat meat occasionally at parties or once a month." In 2023, however, she was able to prepare special Eid meals for her children, using the Qurbani meat received through the International Waqf Fund.

In total, **3,211 people** in two countries benefited from our Qurbani meat project this year

Aichata and her children, aged 16 to five, enjoy some of their Qurbani meat

Easing hunger during the holy month Ramadan



Preparations for Ramadan distribution in Syria

location: **Gaza, India, Mali, and Syria** Food parcels distributed: **502** People helped: **2456** Cost: **£29,999**

In 2023, global hunger grew once more. Conflict was the biggest cause, with the World Food Programme estimating that **70 per cent of the world's hungry people lived in areas affected by war and violence**. The climate breakdown also fuelled hunger, as natural disasters such as drought, flooding, and catastrophic storms grew in intensity and frequency, devastating lives and livelihoods.

In 2023, International Waqf Fund ploughed nearly 30,000£ into easing the hunger of some of the world's most vulnerable families at Ramadan. Focussed on Gaza, India, Mali and Syria, we provided over 500 parcels packed with nutritious staples such as rice, beans, dates, cooking oil – all selected according to local food preferences.

Hassan and his family were among those to receive a food parcel. The **59 year old** lives with his family of **10 in the Gaza Strip**, where decades of recurring conflict and blockade have led to widespread unemployment. Hassan is unable to work, and so the whole family relies on the little his eldest son earns as an agricultural labourer: **just 10 Shekels per day**.

"I never imagined that my life would become so difficult and harsh. From food to clothing, I am unable to meet the basic needs of my family. I am unable to afford even gas, so we cook on the wood and cardboard that I collect daily," explains Hassan, adding that he is afraid they will soon be evicted from their rented home as they have fallen behind on payments.

Ramadan is a blessed time dedicated to drawing closer to God, but for Hassan, it brought additional anxiety about how he and his family would break their fast. Islamic Relief's Ramadan food parcel, filled with nutritious items like flour, rice, oil, dates and pasta was a welcome relief from worry.



In India, Banubibi is proud to share her Ramadan food pack with her family



Hassan's wife takes receipt of one of 150 Ramadan food parcels we funded in Gaza

"I didn't expect the food parcel to be of such high value. It included everything that I needed for Sahoor (pre-dawn meal) and Iftar (breaking the fast meal) during Ramadan,"

he said of the package, which lasted the family about one week. With the food supplies, they were able to make a special dish called Maftoul, which the children were delighted to taste, having only ever seen it cooked on television.

A Ramadan food parcel was also a lifeline for Banubibi, **71, during** the blessed month. Forced by ill health to stop working, Banubibi's only source of income is a small widow's pension. She relies on her daughter and son-in-law, with whom she lives in Ahmedabad, the largest city in India's Gujrat state. For many local families, hunger is experienced not just during the ritual Ramadan fast, but throughout the year. Widespread poverty in the state has left one in six women underweight and 35 per cent of under-fives with stunted growth.

This year, Banubibi received one of **152 food packs** distributed in India thanks to International Waqf Fund. Containing hearty staples such as rice, lentils, sugar, spices and dates, the parcel provided relief from both the physical and psychological effects of poverty.

"It's a kind of respite for us... mental peace to pray without worrying about food," said the grandmother. "[The food parcel] will last our household around two months. We will get more nutritious food and instead of having to buy the basics, we can use the money for other expenses."

Importantly for Banubibi, receiving the food parcel meant she was able to help her family.

"I share it with my daughter, so her family also benefit from it. I can feel proud to be a contributor to my family. It gives me a sense of empowerment that I am not always dependent on them. I am so thankful to the donors."



Ramadan food distribution in Mali, funded by International Waqf Fund

 Location: **South Sudan**
 People helped: **2010** individuals
  Cost: **£50,000**

In many places across the globe, mosques are at the heart of the community. Bringing local people together, they serve as centres for worship and reflection, spiritual growth and learning. In South Sudan, many mosques were destroyed during years of war. Since the war ended in **2020**, some mosques have been restored but most lack water, sanitation and learning spaces for children.

In 2023, we funded a five-month project to provide safe and reliable water supplies to mosques in two states in South Sudan. Aiming to create safe spaces for prayer and Qur'anic learning, the scheme repaired and constructed water facilities, built a school, and installed latrines.

Juba town mosque's water yard had broken down, so the Islamic Relief project repaired and improved the facility. Solar-powered, the new, improved facility has minimal running costs and emits no carbon that would further damage the environment. The scheme also installed a solar-powered water yard at Kapoeta town mosque.

"With the provision of this water yard system many Muslim brothers and sisters in Kapoeta are always welcome for prayers," said Mustafa, who serves as chairperson at Kapoeta mosque. **"We can now save money for other development. Allah will remember you for the good work you have done."**

As well as equipping mosques with clean water for wudu, ritual ablution before prayer, and for learners using the mosque to access Quranic teachings, the project has wider benefits for local communities. Families unable to afford to buy drinking water had resorted to using nearby streams, exposing them to waterborne diseases and parasites, with women shouldering the time-consuming task of water collection. Now, neighbourhoods around the mosque use the facilities to collect safe water for their households, **benefitting 2,000 people in total.**



showing the newly constructed pit latrine

A solar-powered water yard constructed at Kapoeta, South Sudan

Clean and smart solutions at the heart of communities

Water and Sanitation

"Diarrhoea and skin rash cases in our children were very common because we could not afford to buy clean tap water and opted for stream water for cooking, bathing and drinking," said Aisha, who lives in Kapoeta. "Having access to this water point will help free up time for women and improve community health."

Toilets at the mosques were in a poor state of repair. On the verge of collapse, with cracked walls, leaking roofs and poor waste disposal, they had become hubs for diseases like diarrhoea and urinary tract infections. To boost hygiene and sanitation, Islamic Relief built segregated latrines for females and males, each with handwashing facilities. Built of durable materials and with a modern design, the latrines are user-friendly for children, women, and people with disabilities.

In addition, the project constructed two classrooms to provide safe learning spaces. Some 110 boys and girls enrolled for Qur'anic classes, which have become so popular school administrators predict the blocks will soon need expanding to accommodate more children.



A local woman talks to an Islamic Relief aid worker about the new water point



location: **Sri Lanka** People helped: **3,200 individuals** Cost: **£48,000**

In 2023, Sri Lanka still grappled with the legacy of decades disaster, including civil war, the Indian Ocean tsunami, recurring drought and flood, and the Covid19- pandemic. Poverty and inequality continued to rise, with the poorest families struggling to meet even their basic needs. In some communities, water wells frequently ran dry, **forcing people to collect water from unsafe sources – risking dangerous waterborne diseases – or travel long distances to get water elsewhere.**

“The major issue in our village is the lack of drinking water,” explained Yogum, 65, who lived with her husband and three children in Sengamam, Pottuvil. **“The water in the wells is insufficient for everyone in our village. Only those who arrive first are able to access water.”**

When Yogum was unable to get water from the local well, it meant the family incurred an additional expense that they could ill afford. She or her husband, both daily labourers, would have to forego a day’s work to make a **10 kilometre round trip to another village by bicycle or rickshaw**, in order to collect water. The expense and lost earnings made it harder for the family to make ends meet.

In 2023, this changed, thanks to a project funded by International Waqf Fund. The Islamic Relief intervention constructed a deep tube well and installed water purification plant in Yogum’s area, and also in Polonnaruwa.

With each plant producing up to **5,000 litres** of purified water every day, 800 local families gained affordable and reliable access to safe water. Determined to ensure long-term benefit, Islamic Relief brought members of the community together in a committee, training them to maintain their facilities into the future.

The project also helped to boost community health by promoting good hygiene practices, such as handwashing.



Islamic Relief staff talk to local people about the project to improve access to water



Children took part in the awareness session

Yogum telling International Waqf about the water well situation in her village

Reliable and affordable access to water
Water and Sanitation

location: **Kurdistan, Iraq** People helped: **1,200 children** and **18 teachers** Cost: **£50,000**

Armed groups and military operations against them uprooted six million people in Iraq in less than ten years. Taking lives and livelihoods, **Covid19-** deepened poverty and suffering still further, but by **2023**, many displaced people had returned to their homes. However, over one million people remained displaced, with many living in camps scattered across the country. Iraq also faced severe water scarcity, leaving **1.6 million people** without access to adequate water, sanitation and hygiene services.

Millions of people across Iraq needed humanitarian aid to survive. For children, the outlook was particularly dire: An estimated **1.3 million** internally displaced and returnee children struggled to access education without essentials such as civil documentation and access to the internet and devices.

This year, we funded an Islamic Relief project that is helping to change this. The scheme improved school facilities and broaden access to quality education in the Kurdistan region. **Working with a struggling school in Dohuk and another in Halabja, the charity repaired and improved water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. It helped with school maintenance, by replacing broken doors, electrical wiring, and windows, and furnished classrooms and staffrooms with items such as desks, chairs, shelves and garbage bins.**

"Before the project our school faced significant infrastructure challenges," said Nechirvan, **36**, the headteacher of Lulav School. "We had only **16 toilets**, which did not meet required standards, and other facilities such as washrooms, electricity, fencing and roofs which were in dire need of repair.

"The project has transformed the learning environment into a safe and healthy space. It fosters a secure and conducive learning atmosphere."



Nechirvan, headteacher at Lulav School, which Islamic Relief repaired and improved



Muhammad, 14, says his school is cleaner and happier thanks to the project

Transforming facilities at struggling schools

Education and water, sanitation and hygiene





Four toilet blocks were repaired and upgraded – two for teachers, and two for students

To help improve learning outcomes, Islamic Relief gave the schools teaching materials and equipment such as maps, white boards, and skeleton models. It also trained 18 teaching staff to identify and respond to child protection and social cohesion issues in the classroom, as well as how to offer psychosocial support to vulnerable children. As a result, over 1,200 children benefited from safe learning spaces and better quality education. Among them was Muhammad, a student at Lulav School.

“The lack of a gate allowed anyone to enter the school,” said the -14year-old, describing his school before the project. “The state of toilets was deplorable. The path to the bathrooms was uneven and overgrown. Fear of insects, animals, and reptiles deterred us from using the facilities.”

His school is now much better, he explained, “Installing a gate has made school more secure, and renovations made the bathrooms clean and accessible.

Students now go to school with joy and enthusiasm, focusing more on studying. The school is cleaner and this has also made break times more enjoyable.”



Boosting access to life-changing services for children with disabilities

Health and Nutrition



Displaced Palestinians making most of the life during difficult times

location: **Gaza** People helped: **1971 people** Cost: **£50,000**

In May 2023, a much-needed project began in Gaza, where decades of blockade, recurring escalations in hostilities, and insecurity had caused a chronic humanitarian crisis in which more than **2 million people** needed humanitarian aid. Facing an unemployment rate among the highest in the world, around 81 per cent of the population struggled to meet even their basic needs. Essential services, including healthcare and education, were brought to the brink of collapse, deepening the risk to children living with disabilities, in particular.

An Islamic Relief project funded by International Waqf Fund aimed to bolster services for children living with disabilities. Beginning in **May 2023**, project was to support high quality and life-changing care for children with disabilities by helping a facility to provide its services to more children, free of charge. The not-for-profit facility, Palestine Avenir for Childhood Foundation, offered physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and psychosocial services. Expanding its rehabilitation centre to serve more children, it needed help to furnish, equip and operate its new space.

Through the **-14month scheme**, the facility was to receive assistive devices such as wheelchairs and crutches as well as medical equipment and furniture, benefitting an additional **400 children**. Sadly, an unprecedented escalation in Gaza, which began in October and went on to kill tens of thousands of Palestinians, meant the project had to be paused until such time as it is safe to resume.



Current camp situation in Gaza



INTERNATIONAL
WAQF FUND

Infinite Good

International Waqf Fund

22-24 Sampson Road North

Birmingham

B11 1BL

United Kingdom

Tel: +441216220716

waqf@waqf.org

www.waqf.org

Registered Charity No. 1162805

Registered Company No. 08612172